

STATUS OF THE PROVINCIAL
RECONSTRUCTION TEAM
PROGRAM EXPANSION IN IRAQ

SIGIR-07-014
JULY 25, 2007

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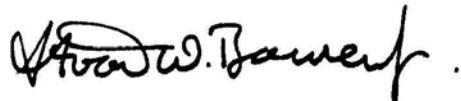
MEMORANDUM FOR U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE
U.S. SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ
COORDINATOR, OFFICE OF PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS
MISSION DIRECTOR-IRAQ, U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
COMMANDING GENERAL, MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE-IRAQ
COMMANDING GENERAL, MULTI-NATIONAL CORPS-IRAQ

SUBJECT: Status of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program Expansion in Iraq
(SIGIR-07-014)

We are providing this audit report for your information and use. We performed the audit in accordance with our statutory duties contained in Public Law 108-106, as amended, which requires that we provide an independent and objective conduct of audits, as well as leadership and coordination of, and recommendations on, policies designed to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the administration of programs and operations to prevent and detect waste, fraud, and abuse. This report provides the status of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) expansion, as well as an update on actions taken to recommendations we made in our earlier report, *Status of Provincial Reconstruction Team Program in Iraq*, SIGIR-06-034, issued on October 29, 2006.

We received and considered comments from the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Embassy-Iraq on a draft of this report when preparing the final report. The comments are addressed in the report, where applicable, and copies are included in the Management Comments section of this report.

We appreciate the courtesies extended to the staff. For additional information on this report, please contact Walt R. Keays (walt.keays@iraq.centcom.mil / 914-822-2796) or Patrick A. Dickriede (patrick.dickriede@iraq.centcom.mil / 914-822-1967). For the report distribution, see Appendix D.



Stuart W. Bowen, Jr.
Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction

cc: See Distribution

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Status of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program Expansion in Iraq

SIGIR-07-014

July 25, 2007

Executive Summary

Introduction

On January 10, 2007, President Bush announced a “New Way Forward” to accelerate Iraq’s transition to self-reliance. The strategy called for a surge of civilian and military personnel into the provinces and a doubling of the number of provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) and personnel to support and sustain the transition to Iraqi control. Though still evolving, plans as of the end of June called for the number of PRTs to grow from 10 to 25 and the staff strength to double to 700. The original 10 PRTs will continue to operate at the provincial level, but an additional 15—called ePRTs—will embed directly into brigade combat teams (BCTs) to deploy in neighborhoods and work at the district and municipal levels. The goal is to create areas where moderates will have political space to operate and anti-Iraqi forces are brought under control.

Objectives

The objectives of this audit, the second of three in a series on PRTs,¹ were to determine the status of the U.S. government’s plan to expand the number of PRTs and supporting staff in Iraq. Specifically, we addressed these questions:

- What human resources and funding have U.S. government organizations identified to support the PRT expansion?
- What performance measures or metrics are used to evaluate the effectiveness of PRTs?
- What actions were taken to address previous recommendations made in SIGIR’s October 2006 report?

We are in the process of conducting fieldwork for the third audit, examining the effectiveness of the PRT Program and will report the findings in September 2007.

¹ For a detailed discussion of the startup of the PRT Program in Iraq, see *Status of Provincial Reconstruction Team Program in Iraq*, SIGIR-06-034, October 29, 2006.

Results

The PRT Program is currently in phase two of a three-phase expansion program and is on course to meet the Administration's goal of doubling the number of PRTs and supporting staff in Iraq:

- Phase I (January-March 2007): ten 4-person ePRT core members were successfully embedded with BCTs in the strategically important provinces of Baghdad, Al Anbar, and northern Babil.
- Phase II (April-August 2007): 136 specialists will join the advance ePRT teams and several priority PRTs. These specialists will work in city management, business development, agribusiness, and other areas. As of July 20, 2007, the Department of Defense (DoD) had deployed 70 of 104 specialists committed to the program and expects to have the remaining 34 in place by the end of August 2007. The Department of State (DoS), Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) are expected to provide the remaining 32 specialists. These specialists have been identified and will begin training on August 27, 2007, in the Washington, D.C. area and are expected to be in Iraq in September.
- Phase III (September-December 2007): an additional 142 specialists are to be deployed to support the work plans of all of the existing PRTs and the new ePRTs. Specialists from DoS, USAID, and the Departments of Justice, Agriculture, and Commerce will deploy to all PRTs and backfill DoD specialists whose one-year deployment terms conclude in February 2008. Full implementation of Phase III depends on the release of the FY 2007 Iraq emergency supplemental appropriations.

As of June 2007, the United States has provided \$1,924 million to support the Iraq PRT Program, and DoS has requested additional funding of \$937 million in FY 2008.

The Office of Provincial Affairs (OPA) is a key component of the program that requires additional development and support. In May 2007, the Chief of Mission established OPA at the minister-counselor level to support the PRT Program. Under the leadership of an ambassador-level coordinator, OPA is charged with synchronizing governance, reconstruction, security, and economic development assistance to the PRTs. Despite the importance of this new office, however, the Embassy has not been able to fill critical staff vacancies to establish continuity of leadership and experience in managing the PRT program.

In October 2006, SIGIR recommended that the Secretaries of State and Defense take action to define PRT objectives and performance measures and to develop milestones for achieving program objectives. To date, OPA and the Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) have not clearly defined PRT objectives and performance measures. Therefore, we cannot easily report on what the PRTs and ePRTs are accomplishing, individually or collectively. In late May 2007, DoS officials told SIGIR that, in response to the new

strategy and surge in Iraq, OPA was reassessing performance indicators with an interagency team in Washington.

In addition to the recommendation to define the PRT objectives and performance measures, SIGIR's October 2006 report made six other recommendations. Most notably, SIGIR recommended that the Secretaries of State and Defense issue a joint statement reaffirming that the PRT initiative is a DoS/DoD priority, clearly defining the mission, and delineating the lines of authority and coordination between civilian and military personnel. The remaining recommendations called for specifying the skill-set needed for civil affairs personnel, which will enable better training, selection, and assignment. Also, SIGIR recommended improved reporting of attack incident data for PRTs located at military forward-operating bases to better maintain visibility over civilian personnel and provide PRTs with critical intelligence. We found that actions were taken to address the intent of these recommendations and consider the recommendations closed.

Recommendations

We recommend that the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq and the Commanding General, MNF-I, take these actions:

1. Develop a performance monitoring system to determine what the PRTs are accomplishing, including clearly defined objectives and performance measures, and milestones for achieving stated objectives.
2. Require PRTs to submit work plans for accomplishing objectives within established milestones.
3. Develop a workforce plan for OPA to fill critical staff vacancies and ensure continuity in leadership and experience managing the PRT Program.

Management Comments and Audit Response

DoD and the U.S. Embassy-Iraq provided written comments on a draft of this report, generally concurring with our recommendations, and MNF-I responded in an e-mail that it concurred with the recommendations. We adjusted our conclusion and recommendation 1 based on new input and technical comments received.

We fully understand the fluid nature of present-day Iraq and the difficulty of planning for future programs. DoD in its response stated that the DoD and DoS PRT teams are developing Joint Action Plans which incorporate clearly defined objectives against established milestones. As these are developed and approved, they could become the baseline for measuring progress until a clear vision can be established as to the longer term strategy of the individual PRTs and the overall program.

We understand that the PRTs are ideally suited for post-conflict engagement at the province and local levels, and that this environment has not been achieved. As a result,

we also understand the Embassy's discussion that some PRTs may convert into Consulates General or others may be led by a senior USAID officer, depending on the situation at an individual PRT or ePRT. We agree with and encourage DoD and the Embassy to implement an improved performance monitoring system based on objectives, milestones, and performance metrics.

We consider that all comments received are responsive to the intent of the recommendations and that technical corrections, as applicable, have been made. The comments received from the Embassy are included in the Management Comments section of the report.

Introduction

Background

The Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Program for Iraq is a U.S.-led, civil-military effort to assist Iraq's provincial and local governments to govern effectively and deliver essential services. Though referred to under the umbrella term, *reconstruction*, the PRT mission encompasses not only capacity development but also counterinsurgency and stability operations. Program funding comes primarily from U.S. sources, including the Economic Support Fund, the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund, the Commander's Emergency Response Program, and new funding targeted specifically for focused stabilization, community action, local governance, and PRT expansion. Other funding has come from the Iraqis (Development Fund for Iraq), coalition partners, nongovernmental organizations, and donor nations.

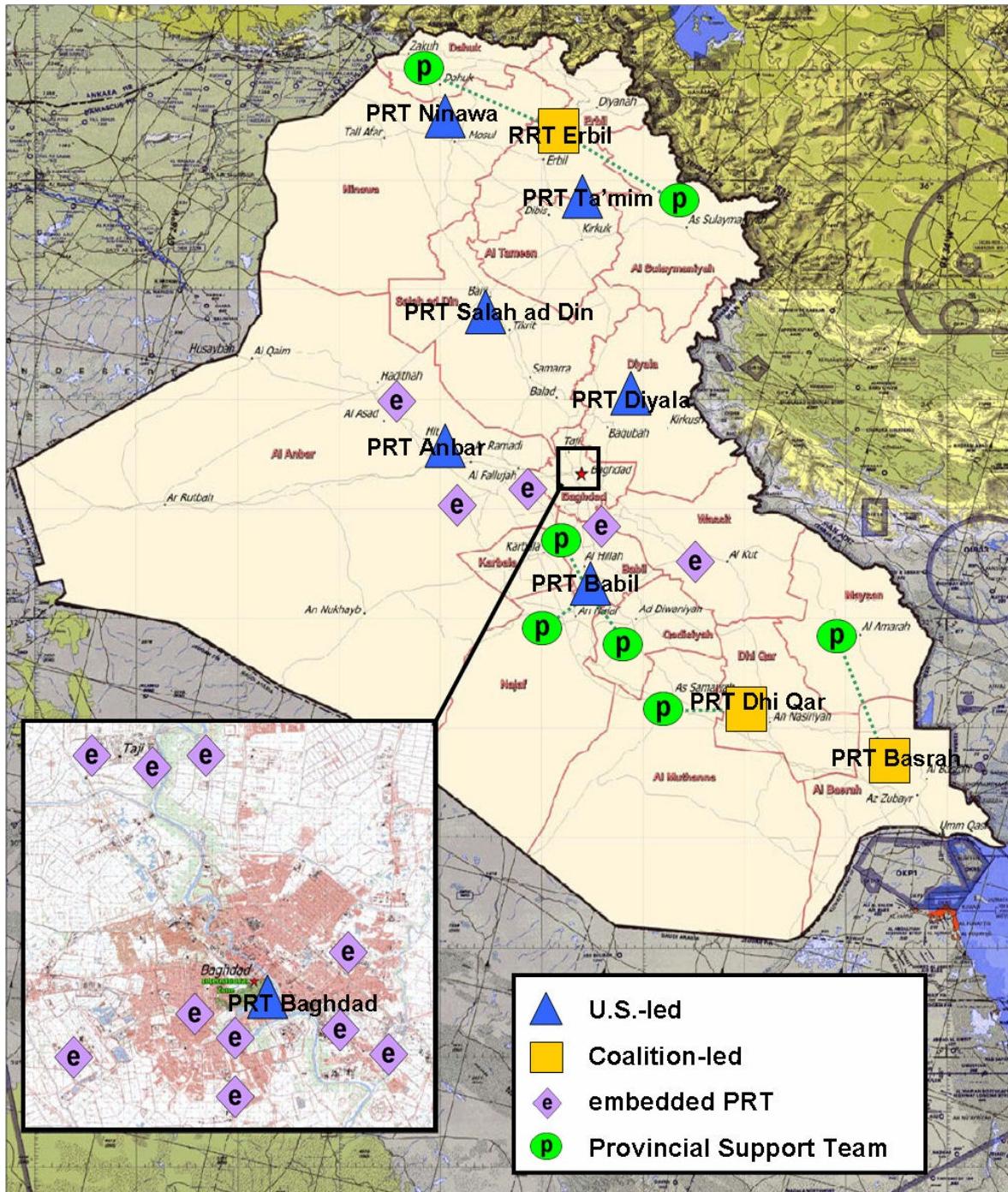
Originally conceived in October 2005 as a two-phase program over four years, the initiative has evolved since the opening of the first PRTs in Mosul, Kirkuk, and Hillah in November 2005. Throughout 2006 and early 2007, the program expanded to seven U.S.-led PRTs and three coalition-led PRTs, along with seven provincial support teams (PSTs)—small cells of 1 to 6 advisers. PSTs provide capacity development advice to provincial officials and receive technical support and oversight from U.S. and coalition personnel assigned to the PRTs at Erbil, Babil, Dhi Qar, and Basrah.

In mid-April 2007, an additional 10—called ePRTs—were deployed (with 5 more being formed); those in the Al Anbar, Baghdad, and northern Babil provinces are now operational. (For locations, see the map below.) Embedded with the brigade combat teams (BCTs),² the ePRTs have the primary mission of supporting counterinsurgency operations. They also work with the established PRTs to expand engagement and interaction with Iraqis in neighborhoods and at the district and municipal levels. Additional ePRTs may be requested as new BCTs arrive in Iraq in support of the surge.

PRT staffing depends on the needs and circumstances of each province and its districts. A PRT team may have up to 100 members, including approximately 30 locally employed staff. An ePRT has only four core members—team leader, senior development specialist, civil affairs officer, and bilingual-bicultural adviser. Staffing at the ePRT may be enhanced with other experts when requested by the team leader. The PRTs and ePRTs comprise personnel from the Departments of State (DoS), Defense (DoD), Justice, Agriculture, and Commerce; the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and its Local Governance Program contractor, RTI International; the Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) and its subordinate command, the Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I); and the Gulf Region Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; as well as Iraqi-born expatriates (often holding U.S. citizenship).

² The U.S. Army's brigade combat team, or BCT, is the basic deployable unit of maneuver, with attached support and fire units necessary to sustain operations separate from the parent division.

Map—PRT Program Expansion in Iraq



Source: SIGIR analysis of MNC—I data, July 2007

The U.S. Embassy-Iraq's Office of Provincial Affairs (OPA) provides overall guidance, coordination, and support to the PRTs and ePRTs, whereas MNF-I leads coalition military efforts in establishing the PRTs. MNC-I, currently staffed by the U.S. Army's III Corps, provides support capability to the PRTs, including deputy team leaders, liaison officers with the major subordinate commands in the field, and movement and other logistical assets. MNC-I oversees the major subordinate commands that work alongside and support the PRTs and ePRTs in the provinces. The mission of PRTs is seen as a four-year effort; the first two years are devoted to supporting provincial government capacity development. As the provincial governments demonstrate increased capability to govern and manage their security environment, the role of coalition forces in the provinces will be reduced. Each PRT was expected to transition into a traditional USAID training program to develop local governance capacity for the remaining two years. However, ongoing security concerns in the provinces have led planners to extend the first phase of the PRT program into 2008.

Objectives

The objectives of this audit, the second of three covering PRTs,³ were to determine the status of the U.S. government's plan to expand the number of PRTs and supporting staff in Iraq. Specifically we addressed these questions:

- What human resources and funding have U.S. government organizations identified to support the PRT expansion?
- What performance measures or metrics are used to evaluate PRT effectiveness?
- What actions have been taken to address previous recommendations made in SIGIR's October 2006 report?

We are conducting fieldwork for the third audit, which examines the effectiveness of the PRT Program, and we will report the findings in September 2007.

Further Reference

For a discussion of the audit scope and methodology, see Appendix A.

For a detailed discussion of the status of prior SIGIR recommendations, see Appendix B.

For acronyms used in this report, see Appendix C.

For the report distribution, see Appendix D.

For the audit team members, see Appendix E.

³ For a detailed discussion of the startup of the PRT Program in Iraq, see *Status of Provincial Reconstruction Team Program in Iraq*, SIGIR-06-034, October 29, 2006.

Program Expansion

Human Resources

In early 2007, the PRT Program expansion began a three-phase rollout of personnel into Iraq. Phase I called for ten 4-person ePRT advance teams to embed with BCTs and to conduct assessments and develop plans for future operations. Phase II called for 136 specialists to join these advance ePRTs and also several priority PRTs, working in such functional areas as city management, business development, and agribusiness. Phase III called for bringing in an additional 142 specialists to support the work plans of all the existing PRTs and the new ePRTs. However, during the course of our audit, PRT expansion planning continued to evolve.

Phase I: January-March 2007

In early 2007, ten 4-person ePRT advance teams were recruited. After completing a PRT-specific training course at the DoS Foreign Service Institute, these core members traveled to Iraq for additional training and familiarization meetings with Embassy and military staff. In April and May these ePRT core members—a DoS senior Foreign Service officer/team leader, a DoD civil affairs officer, a USAID senior development specialist, and a bilingual-bicultural adviser—embedded into their partner BCTs. The ePRTs were assigned to some of Iraq's most volatile and strategically important provinces to support the counterinsurgency: six ePRTs in Baghdad, three in Al Anbar, and one in northern Babil (see Table 1). Because the implementing agencies received no new funding, the agencies are supporting the expansion from their existing operating appropriations.

Phase II: April-August 2007

In June 2007, the decision was made to create four additional ePRTs to support new BCTs arriving in Iraq—three in Baghdad and one in southern Diyala.⁴ Plans were also in progress to move the Wasit PST members, currently stationed in Hillah, to a brigade headquarters in Al Kut, embedded with the BCT. Their staff numbers were also to be augmented. SIGIR was told that active consideration was being given to providing dedicated military movement teams to the Karbala and Najaf PSTs, also based in Hillah.⁵ Critical to this phase is the arrival of 136 personnel to augment the embedded and several of the existing PRTs. As of July 20, 2007, DoD had deployed 70 of 104 specialists committed to the program, and DoD expects to complete its rollout by the end of August 2007.

⁴ According to a senior Embassy official, DoS has not formally authorized the four new ePRTs as of July 20, 2007; however, their creation has been fully vetted through the interagency process, staff is being identified, and official notification is expected shortly.

⁵ According to OPA and MNC-I officials, DoS security travel restrictions and the inability to routinely engage with provincial officials significantly limited the effectiveness of the PSTs. It is believed that embedding the Wasit PST with the Multi-National Division-Central and providing dedicated military movement team support to the Karbala and Najaf PSTs should increase mission accomplishment.

Table 1—Location of PRTs/Partner Military Units

Province Team	Nearest City	Encampment/Base	Military Unit
RRT Erbil	Erbil	Camp Zaytun	Coalition (Korea)
PST Dahuk	Dahuk	Camp Zaytun	Coalition (Korea)
PST Al Sulaymaniyah	As Sulaymaniyah	Camp Zaytun	Coalition (Korea)
PRT Ninawa	Mosul	FOB Marez	4th BCT, 1st InfD
PRT Ta'mim	Kirkuk	FOB Warrior	3d BCT, 25th InfD
PRT Salah ad Din	Tikrit	FOB Speicher	3d BCT, 82d AbnD
PRT Diyala	Baqubah	FOB Warhorse	3d BCT, 1st InfD
ePRT (1)	Southern Diyala	Camp Taji	4th BCT, 2d InfD
PRT Baghdad	Baghdad	International Zone	MND-Baghdad
ePRT (2)	Southern Baghdad	Camp Falcon	4th BCT, 1st InfD
ePRT (3)	Northern Baghdad	Camp Taji	2d BCT, 82d AbnD
ePRT (4)	Northern Baghdad	Camp Taji	1st BCT, 1st CavD
ePRT (5)	Central Baghdad	Camp Liberty	2d BCT, 1st InfD
ePRT (6)	Western Baghdad	Camp Striker	2d BCT, 10th MtnD
ePRT (7)	Eastern Baghdad	Camp Loyalty	2d BCT, 2d InfD
ePRT (8)	Central Baghdad	Camp Prosperity	2d BCT, 1st CavD
ePRT (9)	Eastern Baghdad	Butler range complex	3d BCT, 3d InfD
ePRT (10)	Southern Baghdad	Camp Victory	2d BCT, 3d InfD
PRT Anbar	Ramadi	Camp Blue Diamond	1st BCT, 3d InfD
ePRT (11)	Fallujah	Camp Fallujah	RCT-6
ePRT (12)	Al Asad	Camp Ripper	RCT-2
ePRT (13)	Ramadi	Camp Ramadi	1st BCT, 3d InfD
PRT Babil	Hillah	REO Hillah	n/a
ePRT (14)	Northern Babil	Camp Kalsu	4th BCT, 25th InfD
PST Karbala	Karbala	REO Hillah	n/a
PST Najaf	Najaf	REO Hillah	n/a
PST Qadisiyah	Diwaniyah	REO Hillah	n/a
ePRT Wasit (15)	Al Kut	Camp Delta	214th Fires Bde
PRT Dhi Qar	Tallil	Camp Adder	Coalition (Italy)
PST Muthanna	As Samawah	Camp Adder	Coalition (Italy)
PRT Basrah	Basrah	Basrah Air Station	Coalition (UK)
PST Maysan	Al Amarah	Camp Adder	Coalition (UK)

Source: SIGIR analysis of OPA and MNC-I data

AbnD	Airborne Division
BCT	Brigade Combat Team
Bde	Brigade
CavD	Cavalry Division
ePRT	embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team
FOB	Forward Operating Base
InfD	Infantry Division
MtnD	Mountain Division
MND	Multi-National Division
PST	Provincial Support Team
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
RCT	Regimental Combat Team
REO	Regional Embassy Office
RRT	Regional Reconstruction Team

DoS, USAID and the Department of Agriculture are providing the remaining 32 specialists and expect to deploy these specialists by September. For staff arriving during this phase, priority will be given to the ePRTs and the PRTs in Baghdad, Al Anbar, Diyala, and Salah ad Din. The agencies will continue to fund PRT efforts from existing appropriations.

Phase III: September-December 2007

DoS, USAID, and the Departments of Justice, Agriculture, and Commerce will deploy additional specialists for all PRTs and will backfill DoD specialists whose one-year deployment terms conclude in February 2008. Full implementation of Phase III depends on the release of the FY 2007 Iraq emergency supplemental appropriations. DoS will use those funds to recruit and employ contractors with specialized expertise or to reimburse other civilian agencies for their personnel. Supplemental funding will also be used to reimburse DoD for facility and operational costs for PRT personnel located on military facilities.

Embassy Staffing

Although progress has been made in staffing the PRTs and ePRTs, the Embassy has had difficulty filling critical staff vacancies and ensuring continuity in leadership in OPA.

On May 8, 2007, with the sunset of the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office (IRMO),⁶ the Chief of Mission established OPA at the minister-counselor level to support the PRT Program. Under the leadership of an ambassador-level coordinator, OPA is charged with synchronizing governance, reconstruction, security, and economic development assistance to the PRTs. Despite the long-scheduled termination of IRMO, the transition to OPA management has been difficult. According to Embassy, MNF-I, and MNC-I officials:

- Changeover occurred amid the PRT surge and the establishment of the first 10 ePRTs, including the influx of several hundred personnel.
- A significant number of civilian and military staff members finished their employment contracts or their tours of duty before replacements had arrived, taking with them valuable experience and knowledge about the PRT Program. The result was that most OPA staff, including its leadership, never had a chance to capitalize on that experience.
- Several senior OPA positions—including the Director and Chief of Staff—were filled with staff on short-term, temporary-duty orders until permanent replacements could be identified and sent to Baghdad. Other positions, including program assessment and provincial desk officers, were vacant. Several of the

⁶ IRMO was established as a temporary organization under National Security Presidential Directive 36 and was responsible for providing operational guidance and direction to the PRTs. U.S. Code Title 5, § 3161, states that temporary organizations have a life span not to exceed three years. IRMO was established on May 11, 2004 and was dissolved on May 8, 2007.

remaining longer-serving staff members were approaching the end of their tours of service. The OPA Coordinator, a retired Ambassador, had less than three weeks in Baghdad before having to return to Washington for several weeks to fulfill pre-deployment training requirements.

- After a number of iterations, OPA did not finalize its organizational chart until more than a month after its establishment. According to OPA staff, job assignments during this transition phase were frequently changed, and guidance on job descriptions and individual performance expectations was nonexistent.

Despite these problems, we note that the difficult transition from IRMO to OPA did not delay or hinder the surge of personnel into Iraq, largely because of the laudable efforts of Embassy, USAID, MNF-I, and MNC-I staff. At staff meetings, training sessions, and conferences, and through extensive interviewing, we observed a focused staff, exerting great time and energy in support of the surge. However, according to senior OPA staff and PRT staff currently serving in the provinces, the focus on implementing the surge and the standing up of the new ePRTs came at the expense of fully supporting the existing ten PRTs. One of the justifications for creating OPA was to better respond to requests from the field for more policy and programmatic support, in addition to logistics and operational support. We will continue to assess the level of support by OPA to provincial teams and its impact on PRT effectiveness in our trips to the PRTs and ePRTs over the next few months.

Funding

As of June 2007, the United States has provided \$1,924 billion to support the Iraq PRT Program; \$700 million from the FY 2006 supplemental and \$1,224 billion from the FY 2007 supplemental. This figure does not include funding provided by agencies from their operating appropriations, such as funding for personnel. The FY 2007 supplemental appropriation funding has not yet been released. According to PRT Program managers, the PRT Program will have enough financial resources to support the mission through FY 2007 with the release of FY 2007 supplemental. DoS has requested \$937 million in its FY 2008 budget (*Table 2*).

Table 2: U.S. Support for the PRT Program, Fiscal Years 2006-2008

PRT Funding Category (\$ in millions)	FY 2006 Supplemental Enacted	FY 2007 Supplemental Enacted	FY 2008 Budget Requested	Total
Operational Funding	\$230^a	\$ 414	\$679	\$1,323
Program Funding				
• Provincial Reconstruction Development Council Projects ^b	315	720	160	1,195
• Local Governance Program ^c	155	90	98	343
Program Subtotal	470	810	258^d	1,538
Grand Total	\$700	\$1,224	\$937	\$2,861

Source: Department of State

Notes:

^a None of the operating funds from the FY 2006 supplemental (Public Law 109-234) were obligated or expended in FY 2006 and were carried forward into FY 2007.

^b The Economic Support Fund is used for local reconstruction projects coordinated by the PRTs through Iraqi Provincial Reconstruction Development Councils. The main thrust of this effort is to build capacity at the provincial level by teaching local officials how to prioritize projects and manage infrastructure development and sustainment.

^c Since 2003 USAID has supported, through its Local Governance Program (LGP), the establishment of local government structures to increase Iraqi capacity to deliver basic services. LGP supports the PRT Program by providing competency-based mentoring and technical assistance to local councils, committees, and departments.

^d Includes \$93 million in base agency funding and \$165 million in Global War on Terror (GWOT) funding. GWOT, also known as Title IX, has funds available for military and diplomatic operations overseas, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan. These operations may include a wide variety of activities, such as combating insurgents, civil affairs, capacity building, and infrastructure reconstruction.

Program Assessment

Measuring Performance

In October 2006, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) first reported on the status of the PRT Program.⁷ We noted that the PRT Program had completed its first year and that it was time to record any lessons learned about what worked and what needed improvement in the implementation of the Iraq PRT model. We also recommended that the Secretaries of State and Defense take action to clearly define the PRT objectives and performance measures and to develop milestones for achieving the stated objectives. However, in the seven months since these recommendations were made, we observe that their in-theater organizations, MNF-I and the newly created OPA, are still not in a position to assess what the PRTs and ePRTs are individually or collectively accomplishing.⁸

In response to SIGIR's query about actions taken to address recommendations in our October 2006 report, DoS indicated that a reassessment of performance indicators had begun in late May, which would determine the impact of the new strategy and surge. In consultation with an interagency team in Washington, OPA is exploring ways to combine civil-military objectives into a single performance metric to reflect the PRTs' impact—not only on the daily life of Iraqi society and politics but also on the GOI capacity to perform and carry out its responsibility for governing the country.

Although the ongoing reassessment of the performance indicators is an important first step, we believe that OPA will need to revamp its performance monitoring system, especially how it is used by both management and the provincial teams. The current system, which has been in place in the Embassy since 2003, produces a monthly document designed to assess the progress or regress of the 18 Iraqi provinces and strategic cities in governance, economy, rule of law, and essential services.⁹ It employs a color-coded “traffic light” model to evaluate performance, based on a complicated process of assigning value to specific performance indicators, such as the number of provincial council members working or the percentage of police who follow the orders of judges.¹⁰ These are the four colors and their meanings:

⁷ See *Status of Provincial Reconstruction Program in Iraq*, SIGIR-06-034, October 29, 2006.

⁸ The PRTs submit a weekly situation report to OPA that contains information on their activities, as well as observations and views of the political, economic, infrastructure, reconstruction and security situation relating to the province during the week. However, based on our analysis of the reports since January 2007, while useful in providing a snapshot of what the PRTs are working on and the situation in their provinces, the reports are not meant to measure results or effectiveness.

⁹ The strategic cities are Baghdad, Mosul, northern Babil, Ramadi, Baqubah, Samarra, Fallujah, Najaf, Kirkuk, Tal Afar, and Basra.

¹⁰ For example, for indicators with multiple metrics, the indicator is the weighted sum of the metrics for that indicator rounded to the nearest whole number.

- Red = declined
- Orange = constant
- Amber = slight improvement
- Green = significant improvement

According to current and former officials responsible for managing the assessment program for OPA, there is no linkage between the monthly reports generated by the PRTs and what the PRTs are expected to accomplish in their work plans, such as assisting the provincial governments in planning, developing, and implementing a provincial development strategy and executing their budgets. The current performance-monitoring system was not designed to provide information on what was being accomplished by the PRTs. Furthermore, PRT officials told us that OPA has not provided them any feedback on their monthly assessment reports or guidance on whether to modify or adjust their work plans. According to PRT officials and managers, a successful performance monitoring system must allow for assessing PRTs individually, not collectively, because each function in unique economic and political environments.

Finally, we found that of the ten PRTs in operation, only two—Mosul and Baghdad—had submitted work plans to OPA, making it difficult for managers to determine, on an individual basis, what each PRT is attempting to accomplish. We also discovered that the OPA did not retain an assessment officer position in its new organizational structure, and it is unclear how it will review and evaluate the PRTs.

Prior SIGIR Recommendations

In October 2006, we recommended seven actions to the Secretaries of State and Defense, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, and the Commanding General, MNF-I, to improve the implementation of the Iraq PRT program. Several of the recommendations called for reaffirmation that the PRT initiative was a policy priority of DoS and DoD, spelling out the shared approach to funding operating costs and delineating lines of authority and coordination to achieve better civil-military integration. These recommendations were aimed at addressing what we found to be poor working relationships between U.S. Embassy and MNF-I/MNC-I elements and the lack of support for PRT mission by military headquarter staff and brigade commanders at some of the military's forward operating bases. Many of these officers viewed the mission of capacity development in provincial governments as too vague.

Based on our observations at PRTs and numerous interviews with both current and former officials and officers, the PRT initiative is now clearly perceived as a U.S. government policy priority, and the important role of the PRTs supporting the counterinsurgency and the transition to Iraqi self-reliance is better understood. While attending weekly staff meetings, workshops, and training sessions for new arrivals, we observed civilian and military officials working closely together to find solutions and to implement actions in support of the surge of PRT personnel into Iraq. In meetings at the end of May with officials from nine of the ten ePRTs that deployed in mid-April, we were told that there is full buy-in to the ePRT mission by the BCTs and that the civilians are integral members of the commanders' teams.

Additionally, in May 2007, we visited PRT Salah ad Din, which as we noted in our October 2006 report, had struggled to carry out its work plan because it lacked operational support from its colocated brigade commander. During our visit, PRT officials told us that these operational support issues have been resolved and that they are able to devote 100% of their time to the PRT mission. We noted that the PRT office space, which previously was a shell of a building—lacking furniture, desks, communications equipment, computers, and basic office supplies—was now a fully functioning operation. The PRT officials also told us that they are supported in their security movement requests and that their governance and economic development activities are fully integrated with the brigade commander's battle plan.

In our October 2006 report, we also made several technical recommendations, such as specifying the skill set for civil affairs personnel to enable better training, selection, and assignment. We also recommended better reporting of attack incident data for PRTs located at military forward operating bases to better maintain visibility of civilian personnel by providing PRTs with critical intelligence. We found that actions were taken to address the intent of these recommendations, and we consider them closed. However, we found that steps are still needed to address our recommendation to clearly define the PRT objectives and performance measures and to develop milestones for achieving the stated objectives. We consider this recommendation open. For a summary of the prior SIGIR recommendations, the MNF-I and DoS responses to our recommendations, and the corrective actions taken to date, see Appendix B.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The Provincial Reconstruction Team Program in Iraq appears to be a good venue for U.S. government experts to provide grassroots support for Iraq's transition to self-reliance.

The effort of embedding civilian and military development specialists into 15 BCTs extends the reach of existing PRTs into volatile districts and neighborhoods that are critical to the success of the U.S. government's counterinsurgency and stabilization mission. Since our October 2006 report, the PRT Program has made strides in overcoming problems with civil-military integration, operational support issues, and resource and staffing shortfalls. The deployment of several hundred personnel to carry out the PRT mission has strained staffing and support capabilities, but the PRT Program expansion is on course—in large measure because of the laudable efforts of Embassy, USAID, MNF-I, and MNC-I staff.

Over the course of six to twenty months, the 10 original PRTs have been operating in the provinces—training, coaching, and mentoring provincial government personnel. Now that most of the surge PRT personnel are in place or have been identified and are making their way to Iraq, the Embassy and MNF-I need to clearly define objectives, milestones, and performance metrics for each PRT and the overall program to provide confidence that the PRTs are achieving desired outcomes.

Recommendations

We recommend that the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq and the Commanding General, MNF-I take these actions:

1. Develop a performance monitoring system to determine what is being accomplished by the PRTs, including clearly defined objectives and performance measures, and milestones for achieving stated objectives.
2. Require PRTs to submit work plans for accomplishing objectives within established milestones.
3. Develop a workforce plan for the Office of Provincial Affairs to fill critical staff vacancies and ensure continuity in leadership and experience managing the PRT Program.

Management Comments and Audit Response

DoD and the U.S. Embassy-Iraq provided written comments on a draft of this report, generally concurring with our recommendations, and MNF-I responded in an e-mail that it concurred with the recommendations. We adjusted our conclusion and recommendation 1 based on new input and technical comments received.

We fully understand the fluid nature of present-day Iraq and the difficulty of planning for future programs. DoD in its response stated that the DoD and DoS PRT teams are developing Joint Action Plans which incorporate clearly defined objectives against established milestones. As these are developed and approved, they can become the baseline for measuring progress until a clear vision can be established as to the longer term strategy of the individual PRTs and the overall program.

We understand that the PRTs are ideally suited for post-conflict engagement at the province and local levels, and that this environment has not been achieved. As a result, we also understand the Embassy's discussion that some PRTs may convert into Consulates General or others may be led by a senior USAID officer, depending on the situation at an individual PRT or ePRT. We agree with and encourage DoD and the Embassy to implement an improved performance monitoring system based on objectives, milestones, and performance metrics.

We consider that all comments received are responsive to the intent of the recommendations and that technical corrections, as applicable, have been made. The comments received from the Embassy are included in the Management Comments section of the report.

Appendix A—Scope and Methodology

On May 1, 2007, SIGIR initiated this audit on the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Program expansion in Iraq (Project no. 7015). Specifically, our objectives were to answer three questions:

1. What human resources and funding have U.S. government organizations identified to support the PRT expansion?
2. What performance measures or metrics are used to evaluate PRT effectiveness?
3. What actions were taken to address previous recommendations made in SIGIR's October 2006 report?

To determine if sufficient human resources and funding are available to support the PRT expansion, we examined OPA and MNF-I documents that established the framework and requirements for the PRT expansion. We obtained OPA staffing data and cross-referenced it with our first-hand observation of PRT personnel. We obtained actual and requested funding data and discussed it with OPA officials. While conducting fieldwork at four PRTs and three ePRTs, we observed actual infrastructure, logistical, and staffing conditions and interviewed numerous PRT members about these issues.

To identify the performance measures or metrics used to evaluate PRT effectiveness, we analyzed OPA's monthly PRT assessment tool and submissions by PRTs. We obtained copies and analyzed the PRT's weekly situation reports submitted since the beginning of 2007. In addition, we met with officials and officers of OPA, MNF-I, and MNC-I, who are responsible for reporting on the progress of the PRT Program. We also met with PRT and ePRT officials in Baghdad, Al Anbar, Ninawa, and Al Ta'mim provinces to learn how they measure and report on their progress in carrying out the PRT mission.

To determine the status of actions taken in responding to implementing prior SIGIR recommendations on the PRT program, we requested, received, and reviewed written comments from DoS and MNF-I on their actions to implement the recommendations.

We conducted this audit in Iraq from May 2007 through June 2007. The audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Use of Computer-processed Data

We did not use computer-processed data to perform this audit.

Prior Coverage

Status of Provincial Reconstruction Team Program in Iraq, SIGIR-06-034, October 29, 2006.

Appendix B—Prior SIGIR Recommendations

SIGIR's report, *Status of Provincial Reconstruction Team Program in Iraq*, SIGIR-06-034, issued on October 29, 2006, included seven recommendations on the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Program in Iraq. DoS and MNF-I took sufficient actions to resolve six of the recommendations, leaving one—the establishment of performance measures and milestones—still open. Each recommendation and the actions taken to resolve it are detailed below.

Recommendation 1: The Secretaries of State and Defense issue a joint statement reaffirming that the PRT initiative is a DoS-DoD priority, clearly defining the mission, and delineating the lines of authority and coordination between civilian and military personnel.

Actions Taken: Both DoS and MNF-I concurred with this recommendation, taking these actions:

- The Deputy Secretary of State and Deputy Secretary of Defense signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), effective February 22, 2007.
- The MoA announced the PRT Program as a priority, joint DoS-DoD initiative aimed at bolstering moderates, supporting U.S. counterinsurgency strategy, promoting reconciliation and shaping the political environment, supporting economic development, and building the capacity of Iraqi provincial governments to hasten the transition to Iraqi self-sufficiency.
- The MoA specified operational requirements, authorities, and responsibilities shared between the U.S. Mission-Iraq and MNF-I for provincial reconstruction teams in Iraq.

Status: Closed

Recommendation 2: The Secretaries of State and Defense finalize a memorandum of agreement that spells out the shared approach of funding infrastructure, life support, and operating costs of the PRTs at DoS and DoD sites.

Action Taken: Both DoS and MNF-I concurred with this recommendation. The Deputy Secretary of State and Deputy Secretary of Defense signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), effective February 22, 2007, that specifies funding arrangements for PRT infrastructure, life support, and operating costs.

Status: Closed

Recommendation 3: The Secretaries of State and Defense develop detailed plans for completing and sustaining the PRTs, including clearly defined objectives and

performance measures, milestones for achieving stated objectives, future funding requirements, and strategy for sustaining results and successfully transitioning the program to USAID.

Actions Taken: Both DoS and MNF-I concurred with this recommendation. Since our report was issued in October 2006, however, there has been no substantial progress on the specific issue of performance measures and milestones for achieving stated objectives. The current performance monitoring system has been in place at the U.S. Embassy since 2003 and is designed to assess the progress of the 18 Iraqi provinces and strategic cities in governance, economics, rule of law, and essential services. It was not designed to provide information on what the PRTs are accomplishing.

DoS responded to our questions on this matter, stating that the new Office of Provincial Affairs is reassessing performance indicators, in consultation with an interagency team in Washington. It is exploring ways in which to combine civil-military objectives of the surge into one set of reporting data tied directly to the goals of the joint mission and reflecting an outcome-oriented impact of the PRTs on the daily life of Iraqi society and on Iraqi capacity to govern the country.

Status: Open, actions in progress

Recommendation 4: The U.S. Ambassador to Iraq and the Commanding General, MNF-I, issue a joint statement reaffirming the lines of authority and coordination to achieve effective civilian and military integration in the PRT program

Actions Taken: Both DoS and MNF-I concurred with this recommendation. The Deputy Secretary of State and Deputy Secretary of Defense signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), effective February 22, 2007, that specified operational requirements, authorities, and responsibilities shared between the U.S. Mission-Iraq and MNF-I for PRTs in Iraq. In addition, DoS issued a classified cable in April 2007 that also specified authorities and responsibilities shared between the two organizations. The cable was acknowledged by the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq and the Commanding General, MNF-I.

Status: Closed

Recommendation 5: The U.S. Ambassador to Iraq and the Commanding General, MNF-I, assign responsibility for reporting attack incidents to one individual at each regional Embassy office and military forward operating base and coordinate closely with the U.S. Embassy's Tactical Operations Center.

Actions Taken: Both DoS and MNF-I concurred with this recommendation. The DoS response stated that at the PRTs located at regional Embassy offices (REOs), the Assistant Regional Security Officer reports through the Tactical Operations Center (TOC) all attacks on the REO and on PRT convoys or personnel. At PRTs located on

forward operating bases (FOBs), the Deputy Team Leader fills the role of PRT Security Officer and reports to the TOC using the spot report format for all attack incidents that affect PRT operations and personnel. The Embassy TOC consolidates and tracks all attack incidents, and the Regional Security Officer for Iraq told SIGIR that he was confident his office was informed of all attack incidents involving PRTs located at both REOs and FOBs.

Status: Closed

Recommendation 6: The U.S. Ambassador to Iraq and the Commanding General, MNF-I, specify skill-set requirements for civil affairs personnel at PRTs to enable better training, selection, and assignment.

Actions Taken: MNF-I concurred, and DoS nonconcurred with this recommendation. Although DoS disagreed with this recommendation, it has taken several actions to better prepare both military and civilian personnel to perform PRT work in Iraq.

In early 2007, DoS established the first specialized PRT training program at the Foreign Service Institute. Four training sessions have been held, and 129 PRT personnel representing DoS, DoD, and USAID have completed the program. Additional sessions have been scheduled. In addition, the U.S. Mission-Iraq Office of Provincial Affairs has been revising the position descriptions for each of the PRT specialists. Personnel to fill specialist positions are selected on the basis of the position descriptions so that skills match requirements.

Status: Closed

Recommendation 7: The U.S. Ambassador to Iraq and the Commanding General, MNF-I, consider temporarily assigning the PRT personnel identified for Al Anbar and Al Basrah, as well as the local governance satellite offices in south central Iraq, to functioning PRTs until the security environment improves.

Actions Taken: Both DoS and MNF-I nonconcurred with this recommendation. DoS responded that the PRT leaders at the Al Anbar and Al Basrah locations felt the positive effects of their presence outweighed the security risks and that they were able to employ engagement strategies to maintain a constructive dialogue despite the restrictive security environment. According to DoS, staffing levels would be adjusted to minimize the number of personnel exposed to this additional risk. Except in extreme circumstances, some personnel would be retained to support required functions of the PRT. MNF-I responded that there is progress to be gained by having active PRTs in Al Anbar and Al Basrah despite security issues.

We consider these comments fully responsive to recommendation 7 and note that PRTs are currently operating in both Al Anbar and Al Basrah provinces. We further note that

although the Al Anbar province currently includes three new ePRTs, as well as the regular PRT, the Al Basrah PRT is under constant bombardment and has great difficulty operating more than a limited range of programs with its Iraqi counterparts.

Status: Closed

Appendix C—Acronyms

BCT	brigade combat team
DoD	Department of Defense
DoS	Department of State
ePRT	embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team
FOB	forward operating base
FY	fiscal year
GWOT	Global War on Terror
IRMO	Iraq Reconstruction Management Office
LGP	Local Governance Program
MNC-I	Multi-National Corps-Iraq
MNF-I	Multi-National Force-Iraq
MoA	memorandum of agreement
OPA	Office of Provincial Affairs
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PST	Provincial Support Team
REO	Regional Embassy Office
SIGIR	Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction
TOC	Tactical Operation Center
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

Appendix D—Report Distribution

Department of State

Secretary of State*

Senior Advisor to the Secretary and Coordinator for Iraq*

Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance/Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development

 Director, Office of Iraq Reconstruction

Assistant Secretary for Resource Management/Chief Financial Officer,
Bureau of Resource Management

U.S. Ambassador to Iraq*

 Director, Iraq Transition Assistance Office

 Coordinator, Office of Provincial Affairs*

 Mission Director-Iraq, U.S. Agency for International Development*

Inspector General, Department of State

Inspector General, U.S. Agency for International Development

 Regional Inspector General-Iraq, U.S. Agency for International Development

Department of Defense

Secretary of Defense*

Deputy Secretary of Defense

Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer

 Deputy Chief Financial Officer

 Deputy Comptroller (Program/Budget)

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense-Middle East, Office of Policy/International Security Affairs*

Inspector General, Department of Defense

Director, Defense Contract Audit Agency

Director, Defense Finance and Accounting Service

Director, Defense Contract Management Agency

Department of the Army

Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology

 Principal Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology

 Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Policy and Procurement)

 Commanding General, Joint Contracting Command-Iraq/Afghanistan

Assistant Secretary of the Army for Financial Management and Comptroller

 Chief of Engineers and Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

 Commanding General, Gulf Region Division

 Chief Financial Officer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Auditor General of the Army

U.S. Central Command

Commanding General, Multi-National Force-Iraq*

 Commanding General, Multi-National Corps-Iraq*

 Commanding General, Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq

 Commander, Joint Area Support Group-Central

*Recipient of the draft audit report

Other Federal Government Organizations

Director, Office of Management and Budget
Comptroller General of the United States
Inspector General, Department of the Treasury
Inspector General, Department of Commerce
Inspector General, Department of Health and Human Services
President, Overseas Private Investment Corporation
President, U.S. Institute for Peace

Congressional Committees and Subcommittees, Chairman and Ranking Minority Member

U.S. Senate

Senate Committee on Appropriations
 Subcommittee on Defense
 Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Senate Committee on Armed Services
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
 Subcommittee on International Development and Foreign Assistance, Economic Affairs, and International Environmental Protection
 Subcommittee on International Operations and Organizations, Democracy and Human Rights
 Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South and Central Asian Affairs
Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
 Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security
 Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia
 Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

U.S. House of Representatives

House Committee on Appropriations
 Subcommittee on Defense
 Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
House Committee on Armed Services
House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
 Subcommittee on Government Management, Organization, and Procurement
 Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
 Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight
 Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia

Appendix E—Audit Team Members

This report was prepared and the review was conducted under the direction of Joseph T. McDermott, Assistant Inspector General for Audit, Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction.

The staff members who conducted the audit and contributed to the report included:

Karen D. Bell

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Robert B. Gabriel

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Management Comments

U.S. Embassy-Iraq



*Embassy of the United States of America
Baghdad, Iraq*

July 13, 2007

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM
UNCLASSIFIED

To: SIGIR, John T. McDermott
From: Ambassador Ryan Crocker
Subject: SIGIR Draft Audit Report on PRT Program Expansion - SIGIR-07-014

As requested, please find Embassy Baghdad's substantive and technical comments on the SIGIR Draft Audit Report, *Status of the Provincial Reconstruction Team Program Expansion in Iraq*.

Substantive comments

Conclusion:

Mission does not agree that the time has come to "identify the desired end state for the PRT program" nor that this end state is necessarily "a more traditional USAID training program to develop and mentor local governance capacity."

Embedded PRTs are still being established, and it is premature to speculate on how they will evolve without knowing the future of the military units in which they are now embedded. Some may be consolidated, or merged into provincial-level teams; some may be dissolved, depending upon the outcome of the surge.

Mission believes that the present interagency teams at the provincial level will continue to be required, not only for the variety of programs they now undertake, but also for political engagement at the highest political levels in the provinces. As the provinces acquire more funding of their own, their political power will also grow. It may be that in some cases a team could best be led by a senior USAID officer, but in that case he or she will require a (second) USAID representative on the team to run USAID programs. Several of the PRTs, such as the RRT in Erbil, could be appropriate to convert into Consulates General, as the United States is sure to have a continuing range of interests in that part of Iraq. That is not, however, a determination that the Mission is prepared to make at this time. The PRTs are ideally suited for post-conflict engagement at the provincial and local levels, and thus it would be ironic to plan for giving up some of their essential functions before we can predict how the conflict will end.

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Recommendations:

The SIGIR report made the following recommendations:

1. Develop a performance monitoring system to determine what is being accomplished by the PRTs, including clearly defined objectives and performance measures, milestones for achieving stated objectives, and a strategy for transitioning the program to USAID.

Response: Mission concurs that the performance monitoring system for the PRTs can be improved, including milestones. However, those milestones will be different for each province and perhaps even for each ePRT, given the widely differing circumstances under which they operate. Mission does not concur that it is appropriate to develop a strategy for transitioning the program to USAID, for reasons given above.

2. Require PRTs to submit work plans for accomplishing objectives within established milestones.

Response: Concur.

3. Develop a workforce plan for the Office of Provincial Affairs to fill critical staff vacancies and ensure continuity in leadership and experience managing the PRT Program.

Response: Concur. The Embassy has a workforce plan for the Office of Provincial Affairs, and will continue to refine and fulfill it.

Draft Report technical changes

p. 1, para 3, line 1 -- 10 ePRTs have been deployed thus far, not 15, and that number should be consistent throughout the report.

p. 3, line 1 -- Office of Provincial Affairs (not/not Assistance).

p. 4, Phase II -- while Embassy expects additional PRTs will be created, we do not yet have authority from State to do so. In addition, the DoD rollout will be complete in August, not July.

p. 5, chart -- ePRTS 11-15 should be bracketed or asterisked as they do not yet exist.

p. 8, budget chart -- Local Governance Program, FY2007 supplemental enacted column should read \$90, not/not \$100.

p. 10 -- no assessment officer position has ever existed in the OPA organization chart. The review and evaluation function occurs through normal State Department processes.

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